

Our approach to Fitness to Practise during the Covid-19 pandemic.

30 March 2020

During the ongoing pandemic emergency, our top priority in relation to Fitness to Practise is public protection and patient safety. We will continue to receive and log complaints and concerns, these will be risk assessed and those which present an immediate risk to the public will be advanced if they meet the threshold for interim order. Other cases will be advanced should the risk assessment change or when the current emergency is over.

We will either hear or adjourn any cases currently listed and will list only the following type of case going forward:

1. Initial interim order applications
2. Interim order review hearings
3. High Court applications to extend interim orders
4. Substantive Fitness to Practise review hearings

All other face to face Statutory Committee hearings are being postponed and no new ones will be scheduled until further notice – this allows us to prioritise interim order and substantive order reviews.

In conjunction with the Chair of the Statutory Committee, we are considering arrangements to progress as many priority cases as possible by virtual hearings and case management reviews, and are also exploring the holding of some hearings on papers alone, with the agreement of the parties. We will communicate arrangements directly to the people involved in individual cases.

Joint Regulatory Statement

The UK Healthcare regulators released a recent statement on how we would regulate during the pandemic, which outlines that the current context will be taken into account provided registrants had followed standards and exercised their professional judgement. The statement is available on our website at : <https://www.psni.org.uk/news/joint-regulators-statement-on-covid-19/>

We are grateful for the understanding of all those involved in these processes during this time.